

Timor-Leste Donates to the Sunhak Peace Prize

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The Timor-Leste prime minister making his welcoming remarks at the launching of the Sunhak Peace Prize Committee

In agreement with the founding principles of the Sunhak Peace Prize, created to honor True Parents' peace ideal, the government of Timor-Leste made a donation on January 12 to the Sunhak Peace Prize Committee in the amount of approximately USD100,000.

Thus, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao, prime minister of Timor-Leste, fulfilled a promise he had made during the launching ceremony of the Sunhak Peace Prize. At the launching, he welcomed the prize with the words, "In essence, the message that this Sunhak Peace Prize should carry is this: By living unselfish and altruistic lives, we can build families and communities of peace. By transcending religion, race, nationality and culture, we can build nations and a world of peace. With this message, the Sunhak Peace Prize will serve as a beacon of hope, guiding us all toward a culture of

peace."

Members of Timor-Leste's government held a cabinet meeting last December 19, at which they approved unanimously the resolution to donate to the Sunhak Peace Prize. This resolution bill, approved by the Council of Ministers, states, "Timor-Leste greets the initiative for the establishment of the Sunhak Peace Prize, whose principles include a vision beyond the issues of religion, race, nationality and culture, and promotes the construction of peace communities and nations, so well-defended and promoted by Timor-Leste."

Timor-Leste, a small island nation with a population of 1.18 million, is located east of Indonesia. The nation gained its independence only recently after twenty-five years of suffering under Indonesian colonial rule and internal struggles. In that citizens of Timor Leste have been yearning for peace and independence, the nation's history is similar to Korea's modern history. Its per capita GDP is \$3,664 (by 2014 standards).

The chairman of the Sunhak Peace Prize, Dr. Hong Il-shik, said, "Timor- Leste stands out as an exemplary nation that was able to maintain the... pureness of its soul, even through the long pain of colonization, and to overcome wounds of a painful history peacefully, as 'the first nation to gain its independence in the twenty-first century.' The fact that the Timor-Leste government would show empathy for the Sunhak Peace Prize, which strives for transnational world peace, in itself was a great event for peace that should be conveyed throughout the world." He continued, "In the future, the Sunhak Peace Prize will strive to gain the empathy of and appeal to not only Timor-Leste but the entire world and to work for the implementation of peace for future generations."

The sixty-nine-year-old Xanana Gusmao, who led his government to approve the donation, is a key figure in his nation's independence. His continuous call for unification and peace for Timor-Leste led the international community to recognize him as the actual leader of the nation. His ideal of "reconciliation

and forgiveness" was central to Timor-Leste's effort at achieving its liberation. He has been working to reconcile and build a peaceful relationship between Christianity and Islam and between Indonesia and Timor-Leste. He is respected not only by his people but by the international community. His status helped him to receive the Sydney Peace Prize, the Gwangju Human Rights Prize, and the Sakharov Prize, awarded by the European Parliament.

The Sunhak Peace Prize is an international peace prize that True Mother initiated on February 20, 2013 in honor of True Father, who devoted his life to the realization of borderless, interracial, inter-religious world peace.

The committee seeks to discover individuals and groups that devote themselves and sacrifice themselves for the realization of peace. The prize, in the amount of USD1 million, will be given each year in Seoul.

A peace prize preparatory committee began operations on January 22, 2014 to carry out initial tasks. The Sunhak Peace Prize Committee, launched on August 11, 2014, comprises twelve members, including some foreigners, such as Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, UN secretary general (1992–1996); Ohno Yoshinori, Japanese minister of state, director-general of the Defense Agency (2004–2005) and Larry Beasley CEO of the Washington Times. Dr. Hong Il-shik, president of Korea University (1994–1996, 1998–2006) is chairman of the committee.

Also from Korea are committee members Seongta, head monk of the Jogye order of Korean Buddhism, and Dr. Tae Ik Chung, president of the Korean Council on Foreign Relations.

Prizewinners will be chosen through a transparent process of nominee recommendation and review of the nominees. The first awards ceremony will take place in Seoul's Grand Intercontinental Hotel on August 28, 2015, to commemorate the third anniversary of True Father's ascension.